A

LETTER

Sent to the late

LORD *BALMERINO*,

During the Time he lay under

Sentence of DEATH, in the *TOWER*.

By the Reverend Mr. *HUMPHREYS*,

One of the Clergymen appointed to attend him.

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A LETTER

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 1812 1912 MAY

A

LETTER

Sent to the late

LORD *BALMERINO.*

THE Addreſs I here take the Liberty to make you, proceeds from no other Motive than Chriſtian Charity; if any thing I can offer to your Lordſhip's Conſideration ſhould be ſuitable to your Circumſtances, I hope you will be pleas'd to accept it, how meanly ſoever it is perform'd, with the ſame Charity that I have deſign'd it.

My

My Lord, I am ſincerely concern'd for your melancholy Situation; but, at the ſame Time give me leave to obſerve, that it is the Fruit of your own Choice, the natural Conſequence of your late unhappy Conduct: But this being a Subject of too tender a Nature to expatiate on (as preſuming you are by this Time thoroughly convinc'd of the Unjuſtifiableneſs of your Attempt, and the Malignity of your Crime) I willingly paſs it over, in order to make room for other Conſiderations more befitting your preſent Condition.

As you are now moſt juſtly under the Sentence of the Law, it is by no means my Deſign to add greater Weight to the Afflictions you feel, but rather to contribute my Endeavours to alleviate your Burden, and to aſſiſt you to bear it with becoming Decency and Fortitude.

In order to which, it will be proper for you to lay down this as a fix'd Principle in your Mind, that there is a wiſe, juſt, and good God that governs the World; that whatever befals any of us, (even the ſevereſt of our Sufferings,) is either procured or permitted by his Providence; and conſequently, tho', upon the Account of our Imperfection, we perceive not always the Juſtice and Equity of it, muſt be right, muſt be beſt upon the whole: If you are once throughly perſuaded of this Truth, you'll not find it ſo difficult a Matter to conform your Mind to the Will of Providence, and to be in ſome Meaſure ſatisfy'd with your Condition.

There is no Duty in Religion more generally agreed on, nor more juſtly requir'd by Almighty God, than a perfect Submiſſion to his Will in all Things, nor is there any Diſpoſition of Mind that can either pleaſe him more, or become us better,

ter, than that of being ſatisfy'd with all his wiſe Diſpenſations: Beſides, if we attend to the preſent State of Things, and the various Contingencies of human Life, a Confidence in God, Reſignation to his Will, and Patience under his Inflictions, are Virtues neceſſary for all Men; but more particularly ſo for Perſons under your Circumſtances: You, my Lord, are now call'd forth to exerciſe theſe Heroic Virtues, to figſtalize your ſelf, and to act the Part of a Man and a Chriſtian in a more particular Manner: You have now an Opportunity of ſhewing a noble Example of Patience and Fortitude under your Sufferings, and of wiping off ſome of the Blemiſhes of your Life by a decent and Chriſtian Behaviour at your Death.

My Lord, the World allows you to have a great Share of Intrepidity and Reſolution; and therefore as you find yourſelf already furniſh'd with ſufficient Strength of Mind to bear you up under all Extremities, you'll perhaps look upon this Part of my Letter to be unneceſſary and impertinent: But, my Lord, it is a ſerious Thing to die; were there no more in Death than the momentary Pains of dying, there wou'd be no ſuch mighty Matter in ſubmitting to its Stroak: But when, as Chriſtians, we conſider the Conſequences of this great Revolution of Nature, that Eternity we ſhall then be fix'd in, and the different Portions of Men in another State, according to their different Behaviour in this, to die, conſider'd in this Light, is a Thing of no ſmall Concern and Importance.

What then muſt be done to diſarm this King of Terrors, and to make this Period of our Life eaſy and ſupportable? Not the proud Boaſtings of a falſe and ignorant Security, not the Force of unſeaſonable Mirth and Humour, nor the more raſh and daring Contempt of Futurity can afford us any ſolid

and well-grounded Comfort. Religion is the only Thing that is capable of affording us Relief at the Hour of Death, from thence we muſt derive all our Succours in the Day of our Diſtreſs: For ſince we are all Sinners, and conſequently ſubject to Death, true Repentance takes out its Sting, and frees us from its Terrour. No Man meets Death with becoming Reſolution, that is not in ſome Meaſure prepared for it.

My Lord, I am a Stranger to your Life and Converſation, but am charitably inclin'd to hope that you have made ſome timely Proviſion for another State; and have not, as too many do, put off the great Work of Life to the End of it; this is beſt known to God and your own Conſcience: However, upon the moſt favourable Suppoſition, it wou'd be Madneſs at this Time, not to do all that can be done to complete your Repentance, and to make your Salvation ſure.

You now tread upon the Confines of Eternity, no Time is to be loſt, no Moments are to be miſemploy'd: It concerns you therefore to deal impartially and ſincerely with yourſelf, and not to deceive your Soul in a Matter of ſuch vaſt and infinite Moment as its eternal State.

Your preſent Confinement, how grievous ſoever it is to your Body, may be of no ſmall Advantage to your Soul: It gives you an Opportunity of abſtracting your Mind from the World, of looking into yourſelf, and reflecting upon your paſt Conduct; you now ſee the Folly of all the various Schemes and Purſuits of your former Life; Honour, Pleaſure and Power are now mean and contemptible in your Eyes; and you are by this Time ſufficiently convinc'd that all Things below are Vanity and Vexation: In a Word, you now ſee Things as they

they really are in themſelves, and Value them at no higher Rate than their true and intrinſic Worth.

Permit me then to adviſe you, as a ſincere Well-wiſher to your immortal Soul, to ſhew a noble Specimen of the Contempt of the World, and its paltry Enjoyments, to place your Affections on Things above, and not on Things below; and to have your Heart fix'd there, where you expect your Treaſure. The preſent Life is ſhort and tranſitory, but, ſhort as it is, ſufficiently long for the Evils thereof; in this World we are Strangers and Sojourners, ſtation'd only for a while in a State of Trial, and travelling as it were thro' a ſtrange Country, to our proper Home; for here we have no continuing City, but we ſeek one to come: Since then God, out of Mercy to us, did not deſign this troubleſome World for our perpetual Abode, it will be your Wiſdom and mine to prepare ourſelves for that bliſsful and eternal State where true Joys are to be found.

In the mean Time let it be your Endeavour to reſign yourſelf up to God's wiſe and juſt Diſpoſal, and to poſſeſs your Soul in Patience for a little while, and fortify your Mind with Courage, ſince you ſee Land; the Storm you are in will ſoon be over, and Death will land you on the happy Shore of Peace and Tranquillity: There, as *Job* elegantly expreſſes it, *The wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at Reſt; there the Priſoners reſt together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppreſſor, the ſmall and great are there, and the Servant is free from his Maſter.*

I have perhaps by this long Letter interrupted your own more uſeful Meditations; I ſhall therefore take my Leave of

 you,

you, and commend you to the Father of Mercies and the God of all Conſolation; beſeeching him, out of his infinite Compaſſion, and thro' the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, to ſupply to you the Want of the uſual Meaſures of Time, and Periods of Repentance, to grant that your Puniſhment may be only in this World, and your Pardon ſeal'd in the next; to give you Hope in your Death, and a Portion in his heavenly Kingdom. Theſe are the Affectionate and Hearty Prayers of

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's Sincere Well-Wiſher,

And moſt obedient Servant,

Tower, Aug. 9. 1746.

C. HUMPHREYS.